United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General visits Somalia; meets in Baidoa with Special Representative Jonathan Howe, senior UNOSOM II staff and local leaders; meets in Mogadishu with senior civilian and UNOSOM II military staff; scheduled to go to Addis Ababa tomorrow to meet President of Ethiopia.

+ Security Council, in resolution adopted yesterday, appoints Ramón Escovar-Salom, Attorney-General of Venezuela, as Prosecutor of International Tribunal on war crimes committed in former Yugoslavia.

+ Total outstanding contributions to United Nations fall from $2.3 billion to $1.7 billion this month, Under-Secretary-General Wells tells Fifth Committee.

+ Government of Morocco and Frente Polisario to resume direct talks on Settlement Plan for Western Sahara in New York on Monday; Secetary-General's Special Representative to be present as active observer.

+ General Assembly, in resolution adopted without vote, calls on Secretary-General to provide Nicaragua with aid for refugee settlement, care for war victims, mine clearance and economic rebuilding.

+ General Committee recommends General Assembly include item on its agenda on economic assistance to third States affected by Security Council sanctions against Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

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Continuing his visit to Africa, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali flew this morning from Nairobi to the Somali town of Baidoa, according to a United Nations spokesman. On his arrival there he held a meeting with his Special Representative in Somalia, Jonathan Howe, the Commander in Chief of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), General Cevik Bir, and other senior UNOSOM II staff. He reviewed with them the progress made in implementing the Addis Ababa Agreements of 27 March, focusing particularly on the issue of political reconciliation and reconstruction. They also discussed

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the future of the Operation in the light of the forthcoming withdrawal of some contingents, including United States troops, and the urgent need for the reorganization of remaining forces.

At midday, the Secretary-General addressed civilian and military staff of UNOSOM II at Baidoa, saying that he had come to Somalia on the day when United Nations Day was observed to express his solidarity with them and the Somali people. He then met with the District Council of Baidoa and community elders. After a luncheon hosted by the French contingent, Mr. Boutros-Ghali toured Baidoa.

The Secretary-General then flew with Admiral Howe to Mogadishu. He met there with senior UNOSOM II staff, and expressed gratitude for their work. He said the fact that the Operation was made up of troops from over 30 countries was proof that the United Nations was a reality, and added that what was being done in Somalia would have an effect on the other problems facing the world.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali returned later in the afternoon to Nairobi. Tomorrow, he is scheduled to visit Addis Ababa, where he will meet with the President of Ethiopia.

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The Security Council has appointed Ramón Escovar-Salom, Attorney-General of Venezuela, as Prosecutor of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991. By unanimously adopting resolution 877 (1993) yesterday, the Council completed the process of forming the International Tribunal established by resolution 827 (1993).

The Tribunal, which was established under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, consists of three organs: two trial chambers and an appeals chamber; the prosecutor; and a registry, servicing both chambers and the prosecutor's office. Last month, the General Assembly elected 11 judges, from a slate of 23 candidates nominated by the Council, to serve four-year terms on the Tribunal, effective 17 November.

In prosecuting war crimes, the Tribunal will apply only those rules of international humanitarian law which are part of customary law. The rules of international humanitarian law applicable to armed conflict are embodied in the 1949 Geneva Conventions for the Protection of War Victims; the 1907 Hague Convention on the Laws and Customs of War on Land; the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; and the category of "crimes against humanity", which were first recognized in the Charter and Judgement of the Nürnberg Tribunal.

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Funds received by the United Nations earlier this month reduced total outstanding contributions to the Organization from $2.3 billion to about $1.7

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billion -- $540 million for the regular budget and $1.1 billion for peace-keeping -- according to Melissa Wells, Under Secretary-General for Administration and Management. But she told the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) yesterday that as of the end of September, only 62 Member States had paid up their assessed contributions to the regular budget and 59 Member States had made no payments at all this year.

The representative of Latvia, speaking on behalf of Estonia and Lithuania, told the Committee that the General Assembly's decision to use an ad hoc method to calculate rates of assessment for the 15 States of the former Soviet Union had resulted in unequal financial obligations. Moreover, that decision had not respected the position of the Baltic States that they were not successor States of the former Soviet Union. The representative of Belgium, speaking on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community, called for a new scale of assessments methodology based on national income; the use of recent income data in determining the capacity to pay; and the retention of the floor rate of 0.01 per cent for developing countries.

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The Government of Morocco and the Frente Polisario are to resume direct talks on the Settlement Plan for Western Sahara in New York next Monday, a United Nations spokesman said today. They agreed during their first round of direct talks in July to meet again to discuss points of interest raised by each delegation.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Sahabzada Yaqub-Khan, will be present at the talks next week as an active United Nations observer, according to the spokesman.

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The General Assembly today called on the Secretary-General to provide Nicaragua with assistance in such fields as the settlement of displaced persons and refugees, direct care for war victims, mine clearance and the restoration of productive areas of the country. In a resolution adopted without a vote, the Assembly called for such steps to support the consolidation of peace and the "process of sustained economic and social recovery and development that will render the peace and democracy achieved irreversible".

The Assembly also asked for continued support for Nicaragua from all Member States and international funding agencies, as well as from regional, intraregional and non-governmental organizations.

Introducing the resolution, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Nicaragua said his Government had not been able to integrate the domestic economy into the world economy. He noted that the country had been given more assistance for war than it was now receiving to consolidate democracy.

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The General Committee this morning recommended that the General Assembly include on its agenda an item on economic assistance to third States affected by the imposition of Security Council sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Acting without a vote, the Committee also recommended that the item be allocated to the Second Committee (Economic and Financial).

Introducing the item, the representative of Bulgaria said the sanctions had placed an economic burden on the States in the region and threatened their social, economic and political stability. Although the sanctions had been the most effective peaceful means of promoting resolution of the conflict, the international community should give urgent consideration to their effect on neighbouring States, he stressed. The representative of India called attention to Article 50 of the Charter, which gives affected States the right to consult the Security Council to solve problems arising as a result of sanctions. A number of other speakers also spoke in support of the recommendation, including the representative of Benin, who suggested that the effects of sanctions on third States should be evaluated periodically.

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